

# Effect of Extracurricular and Co-Curricular Activities on Students' Development in Higher Education

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### ABSTRACT

**Purpose:** *The current mandate of the New Education Policy 2020, is to prepare students for the evolving industry practices and skills. Academic qualifications alone through the curriculum are not sufficient to adapt to the VUCA world. Extracurricular activities coupled with co-curricular activities can enforce all round personality development of students. Extracurricular activities make the learner mentally agile, participative, responsive, confident, and independent. An illustration through a case in point enables understanding of the importance of extracurricular activities and how they prove to be beneficial for learners in the higher education system.*

**Approach:** *Data is obtained through the survey method to study the impact of extracurricular activities. The paper is based on analysis of selected relevant papers and articles related to extracurricular activities. The authors have attempted to incorporate the analysis of primary data to establish the role of extracurricular and co-curricular activities.*

**Result:** *The analysis shows that both extracurricular and curricular activities contribute towards confidence building, along with the development of knowledge, skills, and attitude*

**Value:** *With the current mandate of Skill India mission and developing youth for Industry 4.0, to match the skills required in the ever-changing requirement, this paper will contribute to the understanding, of how the skills can be developed for the learners in Higher Education.*

**Type of Paper:** *Exploratory Qualitative paper*

**Keywords:** Extracurricular, Live Projects, Internships, CSR Activities, Events and Student Empowerment

### 1. INTRODUCTION :

Modern-day economy is fast changing with various factors interplaying and interchanging. Technological advancements, disintegrated markets, versatile competition, massive shifts in socio-economic and socio-political environments coupled with natural disasters and man-made disasters. These challenging situations in business demand actions with high speed, resilience, and multi-disciplinary approach. These changes will be brought by the workforce and the manpower engaged. Hence it is imperative that the manpower is skilled in handling the volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA) environment. Surviving and thriving in a rapidly changing external environment requires mental flexibility, analytical ability, creativity, self-learning, self-awareness, and most importantly risk-taking. All this is possible only through extracurricular and co-curricular activities for learners in high education.

VUCA education should embrace change, where learners should direct their own course of learning through extracurricular activities. VUCA thinking involves developing the ability to anticipate and adapt to changes quickly, Learners should be trained to think beyond the boundaries and take decisions independently [1 & 2].

Extracurricular activities are the range of activities planned along with the regular curriculum to meet learners' interests and aptitudes. These activities help the learners to be more involved and engaged in their own groups and development social and soft skills to promote well-being. These activities can include events, voluntary work, sports, and leadership roles in different committees.

Behaviour disorders and discipline among students can be improved through curricular and co-curricular activities. Studies conducted by Eccles and Gootman (2002) [3] reveal that extracurricular activities have a positive impact on learners' overall development. A study by Whitney et al (2012) [4] highlights essential elements of well-being in grooming adults. Amongst the other parameters mentioned in the study, the ability to generate new information and use social indicators is essential for the development of the individual.

Holland and Andre (1987) [5] mentioned five areas of extracurricular activities, personal and social characteristics, academic achievements, educational aspirations, and attainments, participants roles in activities, and environmental social context for the development of individuals. All these are possible only through curricular and co-curricular activities along with academic rigour. The study showed that participation in these activities is highly correlated with higher levels of self-esteem, involvement in social activities with better academic grades, feeling of control over ones' own life, and lower undesired activities.

Fredricks & Eccles (2006) [6], in their research on the effect of extracurricular participation on beneficial outcomes, suggests a positive effect on academic, psychological a behavioural outcomes. Co-curricular activities take place beyond the classroom and sometimes outside the boundaries of classroom, outside the structure of just academic learning. Co-curricular activities complement academic learning.

The role of extracurricular activities in education dates back to the 1930s. Earlier modes of education focused more on academic learning and output. We see today there is more emphasis on extracurricular and co-curricular activities like events, live projects, internships, participation in collegiate activities, sports, and competitions.

## **2. OBJECTIVES :**

- (1) To assess the role of different extracurricular and co-curricular activities in higher education.
- (2) To evaluate the role of extracurricular and co-curricular activities in student empowerment.
- (3) To suggest strategies for effective implementation of extracurricular activities in higher education.

## **3. METHODOLOGY :**

The study is exploratory and qualitative in nature. Data is obtained through survey methods to study the impact of extracurricular activities. The paper is based on an analysis of selected relevant papers and articles related to extracurricular activities. The authors have attempted to incorporate the analysis of primary data to establish the role of extracurricular and co-curricular activities. One part of the analysis is based on the data of 100 complete responses received from postgraduate students in Management Education in Mumbai.

## **4. DISCUSSION :**

### **4.1 To assess the role of extracurricular and co-curricular activities in higher education:**

The skills required for the VUCA world are more than just reading, writing, and numerical. There is more emphasis on critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication. The skills required by the 21<sup>st</sup>-century manager cannot be developed in a traditional classroom setting. Students need to be actively engaged in their learning and have opportunities to apply what they have learned. The main skills identified are creativity, emotional intelligence, communication, leadership, technology application, critical thinking, problem-solving, collaboration, information literacy, social skills, media literacy, productivity, project management, decision-making, adaptability, flexibility, ethics, life skills, analytical ability, and cross-cultural skills. We can categorize the skills into (1) Learning Skills – Critical Thinking, Creativity, Collaboration, and Communication, (2) Literacy Skills- Information, Media, and Technology; (3) Life Skills- Flexibility, Leadership, Initiative, Productivity, and Social Skills.

Some engaging co-curricular activities are internships, live projects, presentations, role-plays, management by movies, and book reviews. These activities can form a part or can be a complete course in the assessment of credit courses in the curriculum. The co-curricular activity through its approach addresses the most important skills required by the 21<sup>st</sup> century manager [7].

**Table 1:** Mapping Activity with Skills

ACTIVITY TYPE	COMPONENTS	SKILLS DEVELOPED
Co-Curricular Activity	Internships, Live Projects, Presentations, Role Play, and Management by Movies, Book Reviews, Immersion Programs, and Value- Add Activities.	Learning Skills – critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication. Literacy Skills- Information, Media, and Technology. Emotional Intelligence, Decision Making, Analytical Ability, Ethics, Cross-Cultural Skills, Problem Solving.
ACTIVITY TYPE	COMPONENTS	SKILLS DEVELOPED
Extra- Curricular Activity	Cultural Events, Forum Events, Sports Events, Competitions, Street Plays, CSR Activities, Literary Fests, College Club Activities, Rural Immersion, Participation in Exhibitions, Outbound Activities, and many more.	Life Skills- Flexibility, Leadership, Initiative, Productivity, Social Skills.  Collaboration, Creativity, Cross-Cultural Skills, Problem Solving, Project Management, Ethics, Adaptability and Communication.

While the co-curricular activities focus on learning skills and literacy skills, the extracurricular activities help to develop the intangible elements of a student’s everyday life. Critical thinking is all about finding solutions to problems and creativity deals with finding fresh approaches and thinking out of the box. But problem-solving and creativity will be functional only when communication is lucid and the ability to work and collaborate with others is mastered. Collaboration in the VUCA world is of utmost importance and communication is the glue that can bring all the skills together. Information skills, literacy skills and technology skills help students understand facts, data points, and application of the data to solve problems and in making decisions. These skills can only be developed through extracurricular and co-curricular activities. However, learning skills and literacy skills alone will not help anyone adapt to the changing circumstances. It’s the life skills, i.e., FLIPS (flexibility, leadership, initiative, productivity, and social skills) which can help to achieve individual goals and organizational goals.

**4.2 To evaluate the role of extracurricular and co-curricular activities in student empowerment:**

The most powerful approach of empowering students is done by encouraging them to think diversely, dream big in life, express their opinions freely, and be engaged in learning in a more democratic and participative way. In this study, a questionnaire comprising all aspects of extracurricular and co-curricular activities was circulated amongst 130 students of which 100 responses, which were complete in all aspects were considered for analysis.

**Table 2:** Evaluating Co-Curricular and Extra Curricular Activities

Question	Opinion (%)
What contributes more to your learning Academic or Non- Academic events	Academic events- 34 Non-Academic- 66
Should education be Multidisciplinary or Specialization Oriented	Multidisciplinary- 60 Specialization Oriented- 40
Do your internship training support in your Final Placements	Extremely Helpful- 35 Helpful to a Large Extent- 65
How have Live Projects have contributed to learning and Placements	Extremely Helpful- 60 Helpful to a Large Extent- 40
How have the extracurricular activities contributed towards Leadership Development	To a Great Extent- 70 To Some Extent- 30
How have the extracurricular activities contributed towards Decision Making Skills	To a Great Extent- 50 To Some Extent- 50

How have the extracurricular activities contributed towards Problem Solving Skills	To a Great Extent- 50 To Some Extent- 50
How have all the extracurricular and co-curricular activities contributed towards overall personality development	To a Great Extent- 14 To Some Extent- 86

The result of the analysis is mixed, learners agree that non-academic activities, in the form of extracurricular activities, are most desirable, however, it cannot be done at the cost of academic activities. The challenge is in incorporating non-academic activities in the form of extracurricular activities along with the curriculum. Learners have expressed that multidisciplinary education is more preferred than only specialization-based education, this is why most management institutes and higher education institutes have introduced the concept of major and minor and electives. The impact of extracurricular activities in the overall development of individuals, will always depend on the institutions approach, endeavour, and commitment towards overall personality development for skills required in the VUCA world. To improve the opinion of respondents towards the impact of extracurricular activities on overall development, higher education institutes will have to design outcome-based activities and map these activities with curriculum and co-curriculum designs.

#### **4.3 To suggest strategies for effective implementation of extracurricular activities in higher education:**

Extracurricular activities are sources that have long been a part of the educational system; students participate in these types of activities, which do not fall under the purview of standard curriculum and teaching methods. Students of all ages and standards participate in these activities at all levels. Sports, gaming, art, music, theatre, poetry, student newspaper, clubs, and government are examples of extracurricular activities. Participation in all these activities, or just one of them, has been linked to the social and academic curriculum. There are various perspectives on what constitutes an extracurricular activity. Outside-of-institute activities may include dances, team sports, and performing arts, whilst inside-of-institute involvement activities may include within the group and academic groups. Different levels of activity involvement and participation may have a positive impact on future success for those who participate; individuals who give their all to extracurricular activities achieve success and sometimes even choose that activity as a career or profession. The primary goal of this research article is to explore how extracurricular activities might influence academic growth, social skills, and the development of talent or ability inside oneself. There are various perspectives on what constitutes an extracurricular activity. Some strategies suggested for the effective implementation of extracurricular and co-curricular activities are [8-11, 13]:

- (1) Using positive reinforcement activities, students like to hear their own voice and resounding success, making every event a fun experience can allow more meaningful learning,
- (2) Permitting creative expressions, students should be allowed not just to say what they think, but also to say it in whichever way they want. Allow learners to be creative with the how, and one will probably be delighted with the what. This can be accomplished by organizing debates, competitions, and so forth.
- (3) Providing more discussion time for students, so that they can explore and develop better ideas, many are concerned that by dedicating too much time to debate, we will not allow time to cover the content that has to be covered. The reality is that both debating and having an opinion on a topic improves learning and memory.
- (4) Another very important strategy to implement extracurricular activities is through different specialization-wise forums and events. The concepts are easily learned along with other literacy skills and life skills.
- (5) The internal components of assessments of different courses, can be designed through projects, presentations, and models.
- (6) Using the concept of 70: 20: 10 model of learning, the curriculum and teaching modules can be designed. In any higher education learning and in professional courses, 70 % of the learning takes place through experiments, experiences, and assignments. Around 20 % of learning is through developmental relationships and only 10 % is through actual coursework and academics. In fact, the basics of learning skills, literacy skills, and life skills are fulfilled through the concept of 70: 20: 10 learning model.

## 5. CONCLUSION :

Results of the study show that extracurricular and co-curricular activities improve academic and social activities. Students participating in extracurricular activities have better experiential learning. Participation in extracurricular activities helps in character development and social skill development. Apart from developing communication skills and team spirit, students learn task-oriented roles and relationship-oriented roles. While these activities promote team cohesiveness and collaboration and make the students independent and confident. Well-structured engaging extracurricular activities are effective in developing holistic individuals with industry readiness [12].

Higher Education Institutions must equip students with Life Skills, Emotional Intelligence, and Values that will stand them in good stead for the future. This can be made possible by the skilled faculty, who can empower each student to excel academically, emotionally, socially, and spiritually. Fortified by a holistic curriculum and backed by a modern teaching process, the students can come forth into the world as responsible, learned, confident, considerate, and sentient global citizens.

Academic leaders must aim to educate students with a multitude of disciplined learning experiences, for their holistic (physical, intellectual, emotional, social & spiritual) development. They must encourage students in the pursuit of brilliance, to emerge as confident and responsible leaders dedicated to serving society with benevolence.

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